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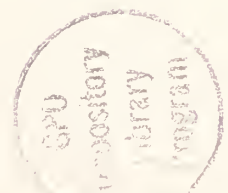
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Record of Decision
for the
LOWER KLIICKITAT
National Wild and Scenic River
Management Plan



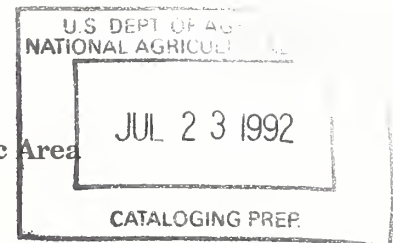
December 1991

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**United States
Department of
Agriculture**



National Agricultural Library

RECORD OF DECISION**LOWER KLICKITAT NATIONAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVER MANAGEMENT PLAN****Klickitat County, Washington****USDA Forest Service
Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area****1. INTRODUCTION**

The segment of the Klickitat River from Wheeler Canyon (river mile 10.8) downstream to the confluence with the Columbia River, was designated as a Recreational River within the National Wild and Scenic River System in 1986.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act requires that the administering agency (in this case the Forest Service) must establish detailed boundaries for the designated segment of the river and its adjacent and related land area, and prepare a comprehensive management plan to provide for the protection of the river values.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the lower Klickitat National Wild and Scenic River Management Plan documents the results of the analysis of alternatives for managing the designated segment of the river, including the effects of each alternative. This Record of Decision (ROD) states which alternative is being selected, compares the selected alternative with the other alternatives considered, and provides a rationale for the decision. This document establishes the final boundaries for the designated segment of the Klickitat National Wild and Scenic River and adopts a plan for management of the area within those boundaries. The management plan is designed to protect and enhance the river's values.

This River Management Plan provides overall direction for managing the designated 10.8 miles of the river. It does not make site-specific decisions. Such decisions will require site-specific environmental analysis which could result in categorical exclusions, environmental assessments, and, possibly, changes in the plan. This River Management Plan describes the conditions which need to be achieved and/or maintained in order to protect the river's values, prescribes standards and guidelines to govern activities within the boundaries that could affect the river's values. It also proposes a schedule of activities which are needed to achieve the desired conditions and establishes a program for monitoring activities within the area to be sure that management direction is followed and the desired results are achieved. This plan does not deal with the administrative details needed to implement the plan.

This River Management Plan establishes standards and guidelines for activities that can be accomplished from a physical, biological, economic, social, and legal perspective, plan accomplishment will depend on budget allocations. If budget allocations are insufficient, activities proposed in the Plan may need to be rescheduled. Insufficient budgets for several years could cause an inability to implement proposed activities, to apply standards and guidelines, and to achieve some of the desired conditions.

The Plan will be revised no later than 15 years from the date of this Record of Decision. However, it may be revised earlier if conditions warrant. Catastrophic events, new direction from Congress, new information, unanticipated changes in conditions, significantly lower budgets than anticipated, or major new technologies could create a need to change the Plan. If the needed change is significant, the Plan will be revised through preparation of another Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). If

the change does not significantly affect the Plan, the National Scenic Area manager could amend the plan by a less extensive procedure, but still with public participation.

2. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Because the river corridor contains only a small amount of federal land, an extensive public involvement program was carried out to assure that the management plan would consider the concerns of the Yakima Indian Nation, Klickitat County, the State of Washington, landowners, river user and conservation groups and others having a stake in how the river is managed. The public involvement program consisted of public meetings, a study Task Force, mailings to interested parties, and newsletters, as well as ongoing informal meetings with interested groups.

Public Meetings - Public meetings were held in Lyle, Trout Lake, and White Salmon, Washington in October, 1987, to let people know about the federal river studies on both the Klickitat and White Salmon Rivers. A formal scoping meeting for the lower Klickitat River took place in Lyle on April 19, 1989. An additional public meeting was held in Lyle on December 5, 1989, to obtain comments on a preliminary range of alternatives. A final public meeting to provide comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement was held in Lyle on September 5, 1990.

Task Force - To help ensure that diverse viewpoints were considered during each step of the study, a broad-based public Task Force was created (the same Task Force also worked with the studies conducted on the upper Klickitat, lower White Salmon, and upper White Salmon). This Task Force served as an integral part of the planning process, helping to identify issues and develop and refine management alternatives. Individual Task Force members also served as conduits to interest groups wishing to be kept informed about the study.

The Task Force was composed of 24 representatives from a wide range of interests concerned about the future of the river including landowners, Native Americans, federal and state agencies, county government, recreation and environmental organizations, and industry.

The Task Force met a number of times between March and November of 1989 to help identify issues, determine the significance of river resources, develop and refine management alternatives, and identify the effects of the alternatives. After the public comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement were analyzed, the Task Force met again throughout the winter of 1990-1991 to help develop a recommended alternative.

Mailings - Announcements of Task Force meetings, copies of Task Force meeting notes, and newsletters were mailed to a list of approximately 175 individuals, agencies, and groups to be sure these other interests were kept informed of the planning process. Newsletters were also mailed to approximately 1,600 other people, including all those owning land along the study segments of the White Salmon and Klickitat Rivers. An initial mailing of the Draft EIS was sent to the Task Force, 27 federal agencies, and about 500 other individuals and groups during July 1990.

Issues - Seven key issues guided the development and evaluation of lower Klickitat River management alternatives. These key issues were:

1. Long-term protection or enhancement of important in-stream and shoreline resources, including the free-flowing character of the river, water quality and quantity, and fish habitat.
2. Long-term protection or enhancement of important upland resources, including scenery, wildlife habitat, and vegetation.

3. Protection of native American treaty rights, traditional resource uses, and cultural sites.
4. Provision of public access and recreation opportunities.
5. Effects of resource protection actions on private property rights and the economic viability of existing and future resource uses, including timber harvest, agriculture, and grazing.
6. The level of county and state support for management and their willingness to be involved.
7. Cost and barriers to implementation of required actions.

Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - The formal public comment period on the Draft EIS began on August 1, 1990, with a notice published in the *Federal Register*. This comment period ended on September 14, 1990. A public meeting to provide the opportunity for verbal comment on the Draft EIS was held in Lyle on September 5, 1990. This meeting was attended by about 50 members of the public. In addition to verbal comments recorded at this public meeting, 23 written comments were received. These included 10 letters from individuals or families, 4 letters from private groups, organizations, or companies, 2 from Klickitat County (Board of County Commissioners; Planning Department), 1 from the State of Washington, 5 from federal agencies/councils, and 1 from Indian Nations. Verbal and written comments and responses to substantive comments are included in Appendix A of the Management Plan Final EIS

3. DECISION AND RATIONALE

Based on the analysis of the alternatives in the Final EIS, it is my decision to select Alternative 2, and adopt its associated management plan. This alternative is a slightly modified version of the Alternative 2 described in the Draft EIS, and is the alternative recommended by the Task Force.

One of the key references of a management plan for a National Wild and Scenic River is found in Sec. 10 (a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. It says that "Each component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System shall be administered in such manner as to protect and enhance the values which caused it to be included in said system without, insofar as is consistent therewith, limiting other uses that do not substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of these values....Management plans for any such component may establish varying degrees of intensity for its protection and development, based on the special attributes of the area." This means that the management plan must strike a balance between the following two directions:

1. Protect the river's outstandingly remarkable (OR) values and other values identified in the Act, and
2. Allow the public to use and enjoy the river's values, as long as these uses are consistent with protection and enhancement of the river's values, and private property rights are protected.

The public and the Task Force previously determined a number of values associated with the river that should be evaluated for "outstandingly remarkable" determination. Using the criteria of **unique** in the area (compared with other rivers in the region) and **exemplary** (an outstanding example among other examples occurring with the region), the following characteristics were identified as "outstandingly remarkable" (OR) values.

- Native American dip-net fishery
- Anadromous fish
- Resident fish
- Hydrology of the river
- Geology of the gorge

Most of the land along the Klickitat River is privately owned. Therefore, the planning team was challenged to strike a balance between adequately protecting and enhancing river values while not restricting uses of private land any more than needed. Most comments received on the Draft EIS and the discussions of the task force supported one or the other of these two positions.

I believe that Alternative 2 best meets the intent of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act for a "Recreational" river by maintaining the current character of the river area and providing long-term protection and enhancement of its "outstandingly remarkable" values. This alternative does not unduly limiting other uses, including private lands, and does not substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of the river's values.

Following is a summary of the key aspects of Alternative 2. Included is the rationale for why the decision was made. For the complete details of Alternative 2 and the Klickitat River Management Plan, see Chapter II and Appendix B of the Final EIS.

Administration

Decision - The Forest Service will work with the State of Washington and Klickitat County to designate the entire Klickitat River below the Yakima Indian Reservation boundary into the Washington State Scenic River system. In the interim, the Forest Service will implement the river management plan using a Task Force approach similar to that used in the planning stage. When the river is put into the state scenic river system, the Forest Service will still retain oversight of river management in the segment that is federally designated (Wheeler Canyon to the Columbia River), and will monitor the implementation of the management plan.

Rationale - Section 11(b)(1) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act says that "... the Secretary of Agriculture... shall assist, advise, and cooperate with states or their political sub-divisions... to plan, protect, and manage river resources." Based on this direction, the Forest Service established the original Task Force involved in development of the river management plan and continues with this direction in deciding on management of the river with the state and county. There is a large portion of non-federal lands within the Klickitat River corridor. The outstanding resources of the river are contained within the river channel, or within a narrow corridor along the river. Joint management through the State Scenic River System is adequate to protect or enhance these river values. Benefits of this decision would allow for consistent management of the entire river's resources from the Yakima Indian Reservation downstream to the Columbia River.

Boundaries

Decision - The current river management boundaries would remain in place until the Klickitat River is designated into the State Scenic Rivers system. At the time of state designation the Forest Service will request to Congress that the boundaries be changed to be consistent with the state maximum river boundaries (a straight 1/4 mile on either side of the river). The exception to this would be that the boundary on the East side of the river within the Lyle urban area would be the 200 feet shorelines management area.

Rationale - The current boundaries have already been delineated by Congress. Until the river is designated into the state system, there will not be a conflict with different river boundaries. The state system only has authority to address lands up to a maximum of the 1/4 mile. It will make river management simpler and more consistent to change the Federal boundary to match up the State's river system authority, at the time of state designation. The urban area of Lyle will be excluded from the river boundary due to its existing developed character and to allow for additional growth within the defined urban area outside of the shorelines management area.

Recreation and Public Access

Decision - Public use of currently used river access sites on private lands will be provided through agreements, easements, or acquisition. Facilities on public lands will have some limited improvements. Existing roaded natural recreation opportunities will be maintained. Motorized watercraft will not be allowed above River Mile 1. A monitoring program will analyze use levels and detect resource damage and/or use conflicts before they become substantial.

Rationale - Recreational use of the river is currently not a problem and is not expected to become a problem in the near future. Current river access is adequate and few user conflicts and resource damage is occurring. Motorized use of the river above the gorge has not been a regular established use. Conflicts with landowners and recreational users have occurred in the past and there are safety concerns over motorized use on this shallow river segment. A monitoring program should be adequate to detect future changes and allow for specific limitations to be developed at a later date before substantial damage occurs, or use conflicts develop.

Protection of In-stream and Upland Resources

Decision - The basis of protection of resource values will be existing Federal, State and County regulations along with additional landowners voluntary efforts and county restrictions on road building on steep slopes along the Klickitat River corridor. Additional coordination and assistance to landowners, Klickitat County, and the State will be provided by the Forest Service for river management.

Rationale - The existing land use rules in place will be adequate to protect/enhance the Klickitat River values with the availability of some federal assistance to landowners, State, County agencies, and the Yakima Indian Nation. Klickitat County Commissioners have made a written commitment to prohibit new road construction on steep slopes visible from the lower Klickitat River. State mechanisms are already in place to maintain water quality, in-stream flows, fisheries, and cultural resources. Assistance from the Federal government will help implement, monitor and enhance these programs to adequately protect the Klickitat Rivers resource values.

Acquisition

Decision - The Forest Service would acquire a limited amount of lands and/or easements to achieve resource protection goals as well as to provide public access to the Klickitat River.

Rationale - Acquisition is not anticipated to be a major tool in implementation of the Klickitat River Management Plan. Limited amounts of land and easements will be purchased or traded to provide limited public access and to protect resources or opportunities that will not be adequately addressed by existing regulations or planned landowner assistance programs. The Forest Service has condemnation authority which will only be used as a last resort in response to any clear and direct threat to a significant river resource value. Voluntary donations of easements to preserve natural resource values will also be

encouraged by working with landowners, Klickitat County, and the State of Washington, to minimize federal acquisition.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The following alternatives were developed after considerable public involvement and discussion with the Task Force. The process included brainstorming a range of solutions to each of the issues, and then synthesizing appropriate individual issue solutions into full alternatives. These alternatives are reasonably consistent internally, yet are adequately different to provide a full range for assessment. For complete details of the alternatives, see Chapter II of the Final EIS.

Alternative 1 - This is the "no-action" alternative required by the National Environmental Policy Act. Adoption of this alternative would mean that the river management plan would not call for any new activities to be undertaken. The county, state, and federal governments and the Yakima Indian Nation would continue to exercise their existing authorities in the river corridor.

There are many existing laws, programs, and policies that apply to the river corridor. The following policies are the ones most relevant to river management: The county Shorelines Master Plan (SMP) and zoning ordinance and the state Forest Practices Act and Hydraulic Projects Approval process provide protection for resources in the river corridor. Another applicable mechanism is the Columbia Basin System Planning effort, designed to double salmon and steelhead production in the Columbia River and its sub-basins, including the Klickitat River. As part of this process, the State of Washington and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakima Indian Nation have jointly developed a plan for the Klickitat River sub-basin.

Since 1986, the lower 1.5 miles of the Klickitat River corridor has been within the boundaries of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA), and therefore subject to its provisions. Public access is currently provided by the state, county, and those private landowners who allow recreational use. Recreation facilities are minimal along the lower Klickitat River.

Alternative 2 - (selected) This is one of two alternatives derived through Task Force discussions. All of the existing mechanisms protecting corridor resources would continue, but would be augmented by increased enforcement of existing regulations and better coordination of river management activities, including provision of recreational opportunities. In this alternative, current management would remain much the same, but would be intensified.

This alternative seeks to add the entire river below Summit Creek to the Washington State Scenic Rivers System. Two management areas within the boundary would be established, a shorelines area which includes the area within 200 feet of the river (the same area as covered by the county's Shorelines Master Plan) and an upland area, which includes all lands from the shorelines area to the river management area boundary, would be the focus of most management actions. The federal designation would remain but management would be coordinated by the Washington State Scenic Rivers Program. A Klickitat River Committee would be created, with representatives from county, state, and federal governments, the Yakima Indian Nation, and private citizens. The Forest Service would maintain an oversight role to make sure river corridor resources were being adequately protected.

Beyond enforcement of existing regulations, the main additional resource protection mechanism would be increased recreation management and increased efforts to work with landowners to accomplish conservation goals. This would include encouraging voluntary resource protection efforts such as donating conservation easements, as well as providing information on tax incentives and possible sources for funding or technical assistance with forestry, agriculture, and other existing land use operations. Recreational uses and opportunities would remain similar to the way they are now, and recreational use would be monitored to help with future management decisions.

Alternative 3 - The goal of this alternative is to maintain the river resources and character much as they are today, and its chief assumption is that additional actions are needed to accomplish this goal. The Forest Service, Klickitat County, Washington State, and the Yakima Indian Nation would form a Management Committee to implement the management plan. The Committee would work with recommendations from a citizen's group that would be established. The existing boundaries would be maintained.

The county would contribute toward additional resource protection by strengthening some existing zoning and shorelines regulations and adding some new ones; the federal government would supplement this by purchase of easements or lands to protect river corridor resources. Existing land uses could continue but new uses would be regulated to insure compatibility with the existing character and qualities of the river corridor. Recreational access would be improved and a limited number of facilities would be added to the existing recreation sites. Recreation use would be monitored comprehensively to learn more about use levels, the impacts of recreational use on the landscape and private property, and what types of opportunities people are looking for when they visit the lower Klickitat for recreation.

The Forest Service would still have the overall management responsibility to assure implementation of the management plan.

Alternative 4 - This alternative was developed by the study team to ensure that a wide range of alternatives was addressed as required by NEPA. The management goal would be not just to maintain, but to enhance river corridor values and provide for increased recreational use and development compatible with resource enhancement objectives. The Forest Service would have responsibility for management, but would be closely guided by recommendations from a formal citizens' advisory committee that would operate under the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The existing boundaries would be maintained.

The county generally would not be asked to strengthen existing zoning or shorelines regulations. Federal purchase of land or easements would be expanded; this alternative relies on compensation, not zoning mechanisms, to meet its resource enhancement goals. Existing recreational sites would contain more facilities and more resource interpretation--including signs, roadside displays, and other forms of communication--to let people know more about the river corridor and its values.

5. FINDINGS REQUIRED BY LAW

A. Identify the Environmentally Preferred Alternative

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations require that a record of decision specify "the alternative or alternatives which were considered to be environmentally preferable" (40 CFR 1505.2).

Alternative 4 is considered to be "environmentally preferable" as defined by the CEQ regulations (causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment and best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources.) Alternative 4 would not only maintain, but enhance, river corridor values and provide for increased recreational use.

Although Alternative 4 is environmentally preferable, I have selected Alternative 2 because it creates a better balance between protecting and enhancing the Klickitat River's outstandingly remarkable values and allowing other uses, particularly of private land, which do not substantially interfere with protection of those values. The emphasis of Alternative 2 is retain the character and traditional uses of this area, which has supported fisheries, forestry, agricultural, and residential uses for many decades.

B. Consistency with the Forest Plan

The land within the Klickitat National Wild and Scenic River is not within the boundary of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Therefore, the Klickitat National Wild and Scenic River was not addressed in the Gifford Pinchot Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP). At this time, the Management Plan for the Klickitat stands on its own. When the LRMP for the Gifford Pinchot National Forest is amended or revised, the Klickitat River Management Plan will be incorporated. At that time, consistency between the two plans will be achieved.

C. Suitability for Timber Production

At present there are no acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands within the wild and scenic river boundary.

Some acres may be acquired within this River Management Plan boundary and converted to National Forest System lands. However, these lands will be acquired for enhancement and protection of river values. This would involve protecting floodplains and the scenery that is visible from the river, and maintaining or enhancing recreation or other resource opportunities on these acquired Federal lands within the boundary. This does not mean that timber will never be harvested. But, if timber is harvested, it will be for the purpose of enhancing wild and scenic river values. Timber will not be harvested on any NFS lands solely for the purpose of producing timber. Given this management direction, all NFS lands, even though tentatively suitable for timber production, will be considered not appropriate for production of timber.

D. Clearcutting and Even-aged Management

There will be no clearcutting or even-aged management of timber on National Forest System lands within the boundary of the Klickitat National Wild and Scenic River, except when determined to be the best method to enhance the outstandingly remarkable river values and biological diversity.

E. Vegetative Manipulation

On National Forest System lands within the River Management Plan boundary, vegetation will only be manipulated if needed to protect or enhance wild and scenic river values. Prior to manipulation, the prescriptions will be determined through an environmental analysis, or an environmental impact statement if the effects are significant.

All proposals that involve vegetative manipulation of tree cover for any purposes will comply with the seven requirements found in '36 CFR 219.27(b).

1. Management prescriptions shall be best suited to the multiple-use goals established for the area with impacts considered in the determination.
2. Management prescriptions shall ensure that the lands can be adequately restocked.
3. Management prescriptions shall not be chosen primarily because they will give the greatest dollar return or the greatest output of timber.
4. Management prescriptions shall consider the effects on residual trees and adjacent stands.
5. Management prescriptions shall avoid permanent impairment of site productivity and insure conservation of soil and water resources.
6. Management prescriptions shall provide the desired effect on water quantity and quality, wildlife and fish habitat, regeneration of desired tree species, forage production, recreation use, and esthetic values.
7. Management prescriptions shall be practical in terms of transportation and harvesting requirements, and total cost of preparation, logging, and administration.

6. MITIGATION

The main thrust of this Wild and Scenic River Management Plan is to protect and enhance the river's outstandingly remarkable values. There are few potential direct or indirect adverse effects on the physical or biological environment caused by the management plan. Instead, the Plan tends to be the mitigating agent to reduce the adverse effects on the Klickitat River and its immediate environment caused by activities such as housing development, timber harvest, recreational use, etc.

However, there are some potential adverse effects on the physical and biological environment of the Klickitat River. These adverse impacts include the effects on soil, vegetation, water quality, etc., from proposed recreation developments (parking, toilets, picnic sites, trails, etc.), and the effects on soil, vegetation, wildlife, etc. of vegetation manipulation needed for the perpetuation of Oregon white oak communities, or to enhance biological diversity (burning, grazing, timber harvest, etc.)

Additional direct adverse effects may be created on water quality, soil, vegetation, etc. by commercial and private recreation use allowed in the plan. This has been mitigated by not encouraging dispersed recreation use, and by the direction to limit use to a level which will maintain desired conditions. A use study is currently in process which will help determine what level of use is compatible with maintaining desired conditions. In addition, monitoring the social and physical effects of recreation use, both on the water and on adjacent land, is required in the Plan. Monitoring also will take place on many of the activities generated by private land owners to be sure that the restrictions imposed in this Plan are carried out and that the effects of the restrictions are as described in the Plan.

7. MONITORING

Monitoring items are included in the Klickitat River Management Plan.

The items which will be monitored in relation to the Klickitat River Management Plan include:

- * The level of protection of sensitive cultural sites and maintenance of traditional Native American uses.
- * Water quality and quantity.
- * Fish populations, habitat, and fishing pressure.
- * Species on the Region 6 Sensitive Species List.
- * Perceptions of river crowding.
- * Safety.
- * Conflict among recreation use types (including off-road use of vehicles) and between recreationists and private landowners.
- * Resource damage in dispersed areas caused by recreationists.
- * Compliance of developments or activities with Management Plan standards,
- * Character of the river area.

8. IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of this decision may begin 30 calendar days after the Notice of Availability of the Final EIS appears in the Federal Register (40 CFR 1506.10)

Each project identified in the Klickitat River Management Plan, which may cause impact to the environment, will require additional environmental analysis prior to project implementation. The appropriate level of analysis will be done in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and Forest Service requirements.

9. APPEAL RIGHTS

This Decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 217. Any written Notice of Appeal of this decision must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 217.9 (Content of a Notice of Appeal) and must include the reasons for appeal. A written Notice of Appeal, in duplicate, must be filed with

John F. Butruille, Regional Forester
USDA Forest Service
Pacific Northwest Region
P.O. Box 3623
Portland, Oregon 97208

within 90 days of the date legal notice of this decision appears in

The Oregonian (Portland, Oregon).

10. CONTACT PERSON

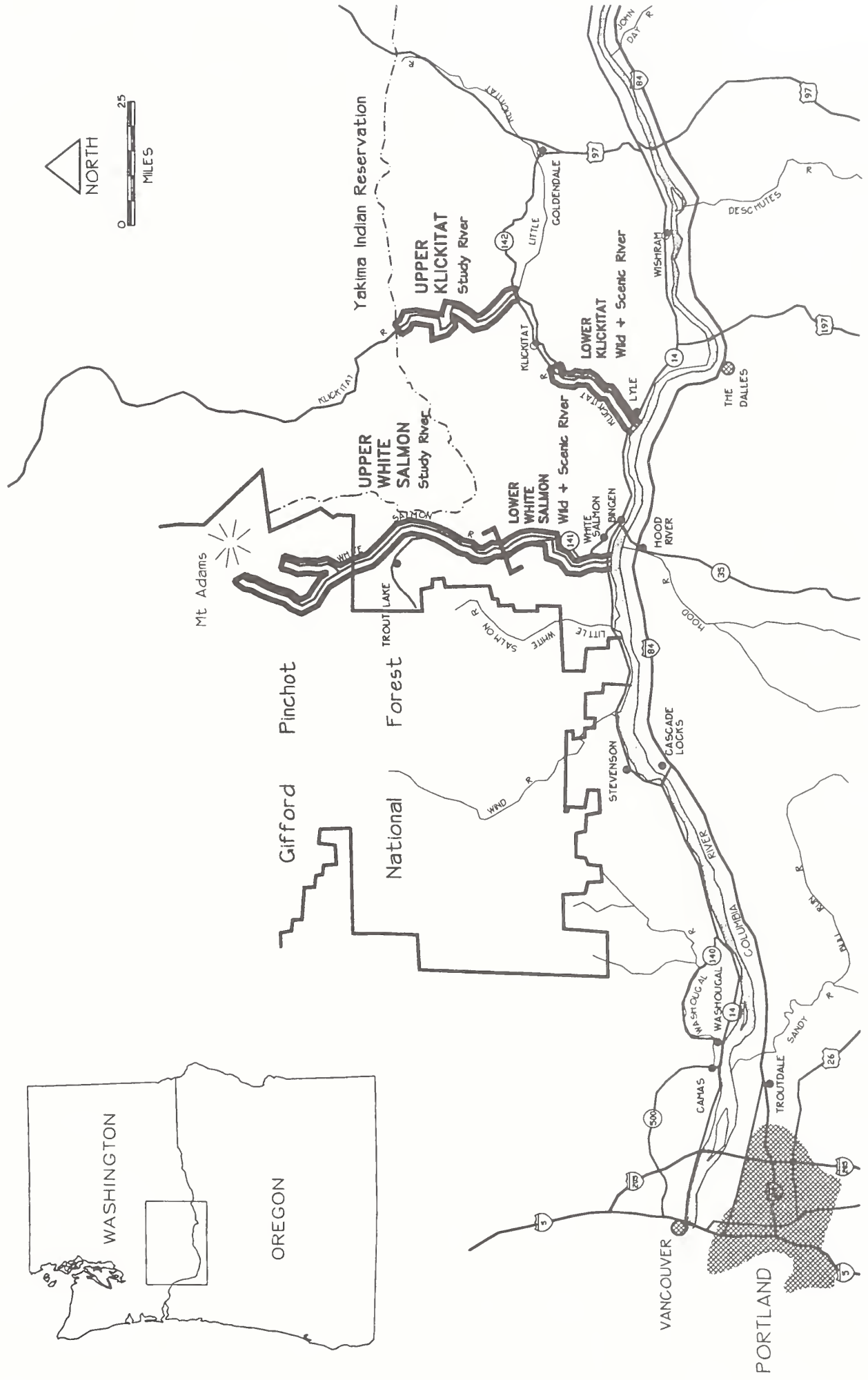
For further information regarding this decision, contact Steve Mellor, Project Manager, USDA Forest Service, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, 902 Wasco Avenue, Suite 200, Hood River, OR 97031, (503) 386-2333.



Arthur J. Carroll, Area Manager
Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area

December 6, 1991
Date

STUDY AREA AND REGIONAL MAP



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